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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

Friday, March 26, 1937

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "CHEESES." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, United States Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C.

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Most of us Americans are a bit conservative when it comes to cheeses. We may like cottage and cream cheeses, and the plain American and brick varieties. But many of us haven't even a bowing acquaintance with the rest of the cheese family. Especially with those that are a little sharp in flavor.

Some of my friends say they don't have cheese on the table very often because it just doesn't agree with them. But there's no reason at all why cheese properly served shouldn't agree with the average person. And I have the Bureau of Home Economics in Washington back of me in making that statement.

"What do I mean by "properly served"? Well, there are just three cheese commandments to obey. First: Remember that cheese is a concentrated protein food and serve it accordingly. Second: Break cheese up into as small particles as possible before serving it. Third: In cooking cheese expose it only to low or moderate heat, and for as short a time as possible.

Since cheese is a concentrated protein food, if you're using it in generous quantities you won't want another protein-rich food during that meal. Maybe your husband always insists on eating 2 or 3 large cubes of cheese with his apple pie. And it's apple pie you have for dessert this noon. Then to be on the safe side perhaps you'd better save that beef roast for tonight. One protein-rich food at a time is a good dietetic rule. As you remember, the protein-rich foods include such things as beef, chicken, fish, cheese, and eggs.

The compactness of the cheese can be broken up and made more digestible by grating or shaving it. Then either during the cooking or just before serving you can mix it with something like spaghetti or rice or a white sauce. You know how Europeans like it. Grated fine and put into a dish to be passed around the table. Then everyone can put all he wants into his soup or over his spaghetti.

In serving cheese this way you avoid breaking the third cheese commandment -- the one about heat. If you use cheese in an oven or double boiler concoction, it's a good idea to mix it through the other ingredients. Then it won't be exposed to direct heat. The right kind of cooking should make cheese more, rather than less, digestible, according to nutrition specialists.

Today we have time to talk about only two kinds of cheese: Cheddar and Swiss.

If you go into a grocery store and order a pound of cheese without asking for any particular kind, what you'll get will be a Cheddar (pronounced ched'er) cheese.

And usually that Cheddar will be green cheese, that is cheese which hasn't been given much time to ripen. Harry L. Wilson is the Cheddar cheese specialist in the Bureau of Dairy Industry. And he says that most American Cheddar is put on the market when it's only a few weeks old. At that stage it's rubbery in texture, mild, - really has no distinctive flavor. And it will cost somewhere around 26 cents a pound, depending on its quality.

But if you ask for a well ripened Cheddar-type cheese you'll get one which is somewhere between eight months and a year old. And it will have a nice, waxy body and a flavor which is still mild, but one of real character. That Cheddar flavor is due to the slow growth of a particular type of bacteria. Of course, this cured Cheddar will cost anywhere from 15 to 25 cents more a pound than the green cheese, because production costs have been higher. Only cheeses made from the best milk and handled properly will stand up under this ripening process. A poor grade of cheese "can't take it".

Swiss cheese ranks next to Cheddar in American popularity. Many grocers and more restaurant men divide the Swiss cheeses into two groups: the imported and the domestic.

That word "imported" should mean "made abroad" but actually it doesn't always. That's what Doctor L. A. Rogers of the Bureau of Dairy Industry says. What it has come to mean is: any good grade of Swiss cheese regardless of where it was made. Doctor Rogers says that it is the eyes or holes in Swiss cheese that indicate its quality. Those eyes have been caused by a long series of bacterial fermentations. First one group of bacteria did its work, then it gave way to another set, which in turn labored and made way for the next. Just like runners in a relay race, touch and go. And it is these bacteria which bring about the distinctive sweetish flavor of good, well-ripened Swiss cheese.

If the fermentations have gone along nicely the eyes in the cheese will be neither too large nor too small. They will be uniform in size and appearance, and will be evenly distributed throughout the cheese. And they indicate pretty accurately the excellence of the flavor of a Swiss cheese.

What a lot of our grocers have come to call domestic Swiss cheese is really processed domestic cheese. It has been made up of various grades of Swiss and Cheddar cheeses ground up, melted, and then run into molds. Naturally it won't have any tell-tale eyes, as they will have disappeared during the melting.

Well, our time is up. In this broadcast we've told you how to shop for two kinds of cheese -- Cheddar and Swiss -- and how to serve cheese so that it will be easily digested.

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